



General Assembly

February Session, 2012

**Substitute Bill No. 156**

\* SB00156HS 032612 \*

**AN ACT CONCERNING SIBLING VISITATION FOR CHILDREN IN THE CARE AND CUSTODY OF THE COMMISSIONER OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 17a-10a of the general statutes is repealed and the  
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2014*):

3 (a) The Commissioner of Children and Families shall ensure that a  
4 child placed in the care and custody of the commissioner pursuant to  
5 an order of temporary custody or an order of commitment is provided  
6 visitation with such child's parents and siblings, unless otherwise  
7 ordered by the court.

8 (b) The commissioner shall ensure that such child's visits with his or  
9 her parents shall occur as frequently as reasonably possible, based  
10 upon consideration of the best interests of the child, including the age  
11 and developmental level of the child, and shall be sufficient in number  
12 and duration to ensure continuation of the relationship.

13 (c) If such child has an existing relationship with a sibling and is  
14 separated from such sibling as a result of intervention by the  
15 commissioner including, but not limited to, placement in a foster home  
16 or in the home of a relative, the commissioner shall, based upon  
17 consideration of the best interests of the child, ensure that such child  
18 has access to and visitation rights with such sibling throughout the  
19 duration of such placement. The commissioner shall ensure that such

20 child's visits with his or her sibling shall occur, on average, not less  
21 than once per week, unless the commissioner finds that the frequency  
22 of such visitation is not in the best interests of each sibling. In  
23 determining the number, frequency and duration of such visits, the  
24 commissioner shall consider the best interests of each sibling, given  
25 each child's age and developmental level and the continuation of the  
26 sibling relationship.

27 (d) The commissioner shall include in each child's plan of treatment  
28 information relating to the factors considered in making visitation  
29 determinations pursuant to this section. If the commissioner  
30 determines that such visits are not in the best interests of the child, that  
31 the occurrence of, on average, not less than one visit per week with his  
32 or her sibling is not in the best interests of each sibling, or that the  
33 number, frequency or duration of the visits requested by the child's  
34 attorney or guardian ad litem is not in the best interests of the child,  
35 the commissioner shall include the reasons for such determination in  
36 the child's plan of treatment.

37 (e) On or before October first of each year, the commissioner shall  
38 report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a, to the select  
39 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters  
40 relating to children, data sufficient to demonstrate compliance with  
41 subsections (a), (c) and (d) of this section.

42 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) The Commissioner of  
43 Children and Families shall meet with the members of each branch of  
44 the Youth Advisory Board to gather recommendations for and to draft  
45 a "Sibling Bill of Rights", which may include, but is not limited to,  
46 ways to protect the relationships of siblings separated as a result of  
47 said commissioner's intervention and an affirmation by the  
48 department of its commitment to preserve the relationships between  
49 siblings who have been separated from each other while under  
50 department care. On or before October 1, 2013, the commissioner and  
51 such members of the Youth Advisory Board shall submit the Sibling  
52 Bill of Rights to the select committee of the General Assembly having

53 cognizance of matters relating to children for consideration of possible  
54 legislative action.

55 (b) The Department of Children and Families shall incorporate the  
56 final version of the Sibling Bill of Rights into department policy and  
57 share such policy with each child placed in the care and custody of the  
58 commissioner pursuant to an order of temporary custody or an order  
59 of commitment.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>October 1, 2014</i>	17a-10a
Sec. 2	<i>from passage</i>	New section

***Statement of Legislative Commissioners:***

Section 1(d) was rewritten to be consistent with the language in section 1(c) and section 2 was reordered for clarity.

<b><i>KID</i></b>	<i>Joint Favorable C/R</i>	HS
<b><i>HS</i></b>	<i>Joint Favorable Subst.-LCO</i>	